

Religious Education Policy



Featherstone All Saints
C of E Academy

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| Approved by: | Governors | Date: November 2024 |
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| Last reviewed on: | November 2024 |
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| Next review due by: | November 2025 |
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Introduction

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

All Saints is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school therefore we deliver RE in accordance with the *Understanding Christianity* and all other legal requirements. *Understanding Christianity* provides a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice, as part of a wider religious, theological and cultural literacy.

All Saints is an increasingly effective church school where children achieve well and grow to be thoughtful, caring, confident and responsible individuals. The schools four core Christian values underpin the work of the school and have a positive impact on the strong relationships between the children, adults and the community it serves.

Religious Education in a Church School lies at the very heart of the curriculum. At least 5% (up to 10%) of curriculum time is devoted to RE;

- Christianity plays a central role in RE, taking up between two thirds and three quarters of the time available;
- Appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is also included.

Vision Statement

Our vision and values are at the core of everything we do. They underpin our teaching and learning, and provide an environment which prepares our pupils as confident and happy citizens.

At All Saints we strive to support and challenge pupils as they grow emotionally, academically and spiritually. Underpinning our Christian ethos is the parable of the mustard seed:

The Parable of the Mustard Seed, Matthew 13: 31-32

[Jesus] told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."



Our school vision encompasses a vision of the Kingdom of God, where God's love rules, where everyone is welcome, where everyone is valued and where everyone can flourish.

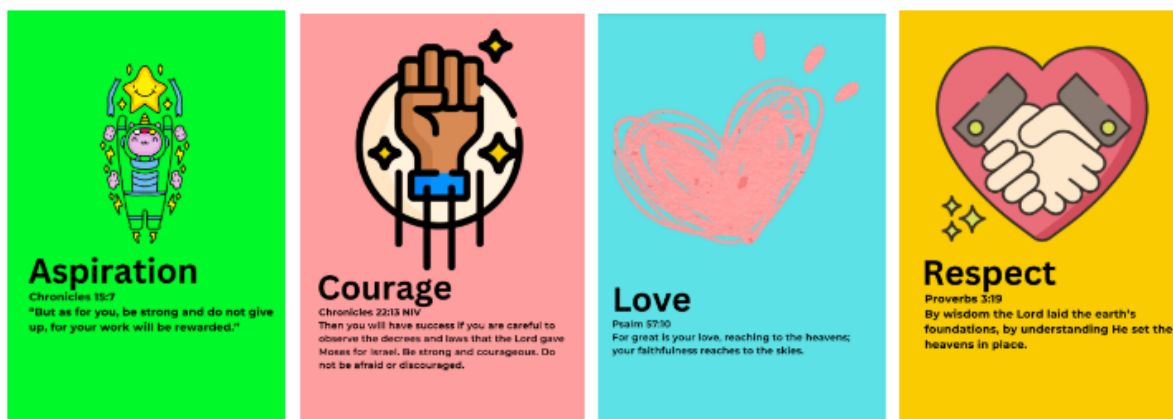
At All Saints we believe that everyone is valued as unique individuals and, like the mustard seed, we all have the potential to grow and to flourish. Jesus said that faith as small as a mustard seed could achieve great things, even move a mountain.

Our school is a close-knit community that feels like a supportive family, rooted together, celebrating everyone's success. We aspire to live as God wants us to; to love and respect God and to treat others how we would want to be treated.

Like the tree that the seed in the parable becomes, we want our school to be a place where everyone feels at home, has their voice heard and regardless of the path that life takes, know that support will always be offered to everyone.

Here at All Saints we encourage children to understand all Christian values with a particular focus on **Aspiration, Courage, Love and Respect**. We promote Christian values through the celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, and through prayer and reflection. Through reflection and prayer we also work to take each child on their own faith journey.

We grow and flourish through...



Aspiration: Here at All Saints pupils are encouraged to aim high and truly believe that the sky is the limit in terms of what they can achieve, just as the mustard seed could never have imagined becoming a tree so huge, that birds could come and roost on the branches.

Courage: Here at All Saints pupils are encouraged to be courageous in all that they do. They are encouraged to take risks to improve their education, social, moral and spiritual outcomes.

Respect: Here at All Saints children are encouraged to go on a path of self-discovery. Children learn how to take responsibility for their own learning and personal development, as well as how to treat and respect others.

Love: Here at All Saints we treat all other people, objects and the environment as we wish to be treated ourselves. We show love to our friends by treating them well and helping everyone succeed.

Rationale/Aims for Teaching RE

At All Saints we believe that Religious Education contributes dramatically to children's lives. Our aim is that Religious Education will:

- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- Teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery

Learning about Religion

We learn about:

- God who reveals the truth about himself and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, his action in history and through the prophets;
- God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us;
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason

Learning from Religion

We learn from:

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it;
- responding personally to the stories and teachings of Jesus Christ;
- examples of Christian living which give priority to the values of unconditional love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion and faith

Knowledge in Religious Education

- The life of Jesus
- The Bible
- The Church
- Festivals and Celebrations
- The Christian way of life
- Non-Christian faiths

Pupils should be helped to develop skills for learning through Religious Education. Progress in RE is dependent on the development of a range of skills which enable pupils to understand the concepts of experience, enquiry, encounters and explore and engage.

Attitudes in Religious Education

Attitudes such as respect for others and respect for the truth, care for all people and determination to achieve should be promoted through all areas of school life. There are some attitudes that are fundamental to Religious Education. These attitudes enable learners to enter fully into the study of religions, and are in turn fostered and deepened by the study of RE.

- reflect theologically and explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society;
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief;
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today;
- understand the challenge faced by Christians in today's society;
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text;
- recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world;
- begin to develop their own commitments, beliefs and values;
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious;
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions;
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour;
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world;
- understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.;
- the contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

- RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.
- The school community - RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.
- The community within which the school is located - RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.
- The UK community - a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.
- The global community - RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.
- RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

The Teaching of RE

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through locally agreed syllabuses, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content.

Religious Education at All Saints School is delivered in the following way. In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities.

Curriculum

At Featherstone All Saints C of E Academy, we follow *Understanding Christianity* which builds up pupils' encounters with biblical concepts through texts, placing them within the wider Bible story.

The *Understanding Christianity* framework provides:

- a **theological and conceptual basis**, taking seriously Christian accounts of the 'big story' of salvation and the relationship of the reader/pupil to these texts.
- a clear outline of **core knowledge 'building blocks'** in relation to Christianity, to enable teachers to see what pupils should know, understand and be able to do.
- a **teaching and learning approach** to enable pupils to move from an understanding of the biblical text and how to handle it, to an understanding of what this means for Christians within the Church and in Christian living, including opportunities for pupils to examine and evaluate connections between these ideas and the wider world

In accordance with the structure of *Understanding Christianity* we have agreed that the following units will be taught:

| Term | Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|----------|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Autumn 1 | Who is special and where do we belong? | Being Special – Where do we belong? | UC: God What do Christians believe God is like? | UC: Creation Who made the world? | UC: God/Incarnation What is the trinity? | UC: Creation What do Christians learn from the creation story? | UC: God What does it mean if God is holy and loving? | UC: Creation Creation and Science: Conflicting or complimentary |
| Autumn 2 | Special Times | UC – Incarnation Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas? | UC: Incarnation Why does Christmas matter to Christians? | Thematic – Caring for the World How should we care for the world and for others and why does it matter? | Thematic: Why are festivals important to religious communities? | UC: People of God What is it like to follow God? | UC: Incarnation Was Jesus the Messiah? | UC: People of God How can following God Bring Freedom and Justice? |
| Spring 1 | What is special about our world? | UC – Creation Why is the word God so important to Christians? | World Faith Who is Muslim and what do they believe? (Part 1) | World Faith Who is Jewish and how do they live? (Part 1) | World Faith What does it mean to be a Sikh in Britain today? (Part 1) | World Faith What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today? (Part 1) | World Faith What does it mean for a Jewish person to follow God? | World Faith What does it mean for a Muslim person to follow God? |
| Spring 2 | Special People | UC – Salvation Why do Christians put a cross in an easter garden? | UC: Salvation Why does Easter matter to Christians? | Thematic What makes some places sacred to believers? | UC: Salvation Why do Christians call the day Jesus died Good Friday | UC: Kingdom of God When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost? | UC: Salvation What did Jesus do to save human beings? | UC: Salvation What difference does the resurrection <u>make</u> for Christians? |
| Summer 1 | Special Stories | Thematic: Which stories are special and why? | World Faith Who is Muslim and what do they believe? (Part 2) | UC: Gospel What is the good news that Jesus Brings? | UC: Gospel What kind of World did Jesus Want? | Thematic How and why do believers show <u>their</u> commitment during the journey of life? | UC: Gospel What would Jesus Do? | Thematic Why is pilgrimage important to some religious believers? |
| Summer 2 | Special Places | Thematic: Which places are special and why? | Thematic Who am I and what does it mean to belong? | World Faith Who is Jewish and how do they live? (Part 2) | World Faith What does it mean to be a Sikh in Britain today? (Part 2) | World Faith What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today? (Part 2) | Thematic How does religion help people live through good and bad times? | UC: Kingdom of God What kind of king is Jesus? |

Each year, we will also have themed weeks which a focus on;

Autumn: God the Father, Spring: God the Holy Spirit, Summer: God the Son

All children will participate in further exploring another faith in our multi-faith themed weeks.

Assessment and Recording of RE

In line with the school policy on assessment and recording it is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular formative assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. At the end of each unit the pupils will complete an end of unit assessment which ensures that the knowledge taught, has been learnt.

Each unit of work is assessed every half term for years 1 to 6.

The assessments are ongoing, though there can be end of unit activities as necessary. At the end of each unit opportunities for assessment have been suggested.

Monitoring

The RE subject leader will monitor RE within the school through analysis of assessment data, class observations, scrutiny of books and talking to the children each year. Any issues picked up will be fed into the SIAMs self-evaluation form and addressed at staff meetings, INSET and working with teachers and/or Governors.

The subject leader is also responsible for contributing to the Church School self-evaluation process (SIAMs) making sure it is regularly updated alongside the Collective Worship co-ordinator.

As a core subject regular monitoring of RE occurs in the form of worship monitoring, book scrutiny and RE lesson observations.

Responsibilities for RE within the school, (Co-ordinator, Head teacher and Governors)

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and Headteacher should also make sure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- The subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified, if appropriate, supported by teaching staff with planning, assessment etc. and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- Teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- Teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- Clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw.
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress

The right of Withdrawal from RE

At All Saints we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at All Saints.

Review

This policy will be reviewed yearly.

Linked Documents:

- Collective Worship Policy